

Prominence No Factor in Club Action

By GENE HUNTER

Advertiser Staff Writer

Being relatively unknown in the community helped two Orientals to be admitted into the long-restricted Pacific Club, they said yesterday.

They are Philip H. Ching, 37-year-old vice president of First National Bank, and 30-year-old Asa M. Akinaka, an attorney, who were admitted to Pacific Club membership Tuesday night.

The club long has been restricted to Caucasian, Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian business and community leaders, although a group within the organization has worked quietly for several years to broaden the admission policy and permit members of other races to join.

Several prominent persons



CHING

have turned down invitations to join the Pacific Club because of the organization's racial policies. They include Gov. John A. Burns, Dr. Thomas H. Hamilton, president of the University of Hawaii, and Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell.

Ching and Akinaka agreed that the Pacific Club's motives might have been questioned had such men as Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, Sen. Hiram L. Fong or financier Chinn Ho become the first Oriental members.

Such prominent Orientals might have been considered only "token members" admitted to membership because of their name value, Ching and Akinaka said.



AKINAKA

Ching said he viewed his admission to the 585-member, 117-year-old Pacific Club an example of "the evolution of Island society."

"I have felt that it wouldn't be pressure that would make them (the Pacific Club) change their policies, but that eventually this would come about naturally," Ching said.

"I know from comments from members that the whole thing was handled very smoothly and very nicely. There was no lining up of groups for or against."

Akinaka said he and Ching were asked if they would be willing to have their names submitted for membership consideration. He said they agreed that their feelings would not be hurt if they were rejected.

Akinaka is a member of the law firm of Padgett, Greeley, Marumoto & Akinaka.

The firm's former senior partner, Chief Justice Masaji Marumoto, was turned down for Pacific Club membership in 1957.

Since then, a long-time Pacific Club member said yesterday, a group within the organization has worked to break down racial barriers

to membership.

Some Caucasian members felt so strongly about the racial barriers that they quit the club, the member said. But others who disagreed with the racial policy remained members, hoping to effect a change.

In recent years several members with Oriental wives were admitted to the Pacific Club, he said, and they also took part in the attempt to change the unwritten rule about Oriental members.

Ching's name was submitted for membership by Gilbert W. Root and J. Russell Cades. Akinaka's name was submitted by C. Dudley Pratt and C. Frank Damon.

Their names were approved by a membership committee headed by Henry B. Clark Jr. The membership committee's action was

See Editorial

"A Racial Opening"

Page D-2

approved by the Pacific Club's directors — L. H. Bingham, president; William Auli, Dr. John Holmes, Alan Renton, Frederick A. Scatterer III and Keith Steiner.

The Pacific Club's admittance of two Oriental members leaves four major Island organizations with "restricted" memberships.

These are the Outrigger Canoe Club, the Oahu Country Club, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and the Eagles Lodge — although each of these dispense to some extent that they are restricted.

Howard Goss, president of the Outrigger Canoe Club, said yesterday that at least 28 of that group's 1,100 members are Oriental.

Goss said the Outrigger carries no racial designations on its membership lists, but that a check of surnames shows about 28 Oriental members.

Goss also said the Outrigger's admission policy "is constantly under review to be certain the admissions committee is attuned to the wants of the membership." He added that a number of Caucasian and Hawaiian Outrigger members have Oriental wives.

He explained that the Outrigger was organized in 1908 as a group interested in preserving Island water sports such as swimming, surfing and canoe racing — activities in which few Orientals participated at that time.

The club's bylaws do not prohibit Oriental or Negro members. Goss, asked about the admission policy that had kept the organization almost completely Caucasian and Hawaiian said: "It's been a source of irritation to me."

But he also said he did not believe the policies of a private club should be a matter of public concern — that members should be free to choose new members without criticism.

He pointed out that some non-Caucasian organizations in Hawaii have restricted memberships — including Kamehameha Schools, which admits only Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian students, and several Oriental chambers of commerce.

Goss said he knew of no Negro members of the Outrigger Canoe club. Asked the chances of a Negro professional man or community leader being accepted for membership, he said: "It would bother me very much if he were turned down."

Officials of the Elks Club and the Eagles Lodge have explained that their membership is restricted by their organizations' national policies.

The Eagles, however, admit Hawaiians because they are scientifically considered Caucasians — although science also says the Polynesians originated in Asia.

The Eagles Lodge also has part-Oriental members, who are admitted because they also are part-Caucasian or part-Hawaiian. However, there are no Negro members.